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## PREHISTORIC ARCHÆOLOGY.

H. et L. SIRET. *Les premiers âges du métal dans le Sud-Est de l'Espagne*. 8vo, pp. 110. Bruxelles, 1888 ; Polleunis, Ceuterick et Lefébure.

This valuable contribution to the prehistoric ages of the Spanish peninsula is an abstract from the larger work of 437 pages and 70 plates which was written by the same authors in 1887. The excavations were carried on from 1881 to 1887 on the coast of the province Almeria, between the cities of Carthagen and Almeria. On this space of 75 kilometers, some forty sites of prehistoric habitation were examined. Fifteen of these belonged to the stone-age. They contained pieces of broken stone and polished stone, comprising all the usual tools, weapons, vessels, handmills, and ornaments. These men of the stone-age had small dwellings with stone walls, but large tombs in which many persons were buried together. Another group of prehistoric settlements, seven in number, represent a transition from stone to metal. Here the dwellings become real houses ; their walls built of stone and earth, and their roofs held up by rafters covered with bundles of reeds and branches. In the tombs of this transitional period, urns full of charred bones occur among skeletons, which are not burned ; but of most importance is the occurrence of metal. Besides half-smelted copper slags, appear simple copper implements, such as needles, arrow-heads, and chisels. A few bronze articles were also found, especially ornaments. The neighboring mountains produce copper, but the tin, whether in the form of bronze or not, must have been imported. The third group of settlements, of developed metal-workers, have their villages constructed on sloping hillsides, and somewhat fortified by surrounding walls or ramparts. The houses show the same construction as before. The saws and mills are now the only remains of the stone-age. Pieces of clay vessels, bone implements, and bronze and copper objects, were found in these houses. In the graves of this period, incineration has given way to the primary form of simple burial. Tombs were often made in the floor of the huts, and the bodies placed immediately in the earth or else inclosed in large urns. The gifts to the dead found in these tombs were very various, and numerous clay vessels of artistic shape, especially drinking-cups, daggers, halberds, knives, rings and pendants (together some 300), and other objects were contained in them. The weapons, for the most part, were copper, but notably three swords, the only ones found, were of bronze. Silver rivets adorned the handles of some of the weapons, and many of the pendants found in the graves of the women were of silver. In other countries, silver is hardly known during the bronze age, but gold is usually more common. The occurrence of native silver in the mountains of Spain

is the explanation of this phenomenon. Only a very few gold objects were found in these graves.

The meaning of these different stages of civilization seems to be, that the original people of the stone-age were visited by a more-civilized, friendly people. These taught them the use of copper, and imported rings and other ornaments of bronze. In the next stage came other strangers, but enemies. Proof of this is the finding of the fortified settlements and bronze objects of much more advanced workmanship than the native products. Thus, the three swords were evidently booty won from the invaders. The friendly visitors who introduced the custom of incineration were most probably of Aryan descent. The hostile visitors who came later might well be some Phoenician people, urged on by their well-known fondness for silver. The 70 crania gathered from the graves do not, however, seem to give any information as to these various races.—A. G. MEYER, in *Berl. phil. Woch.*, 1889, No. 34.